DIG MAG

NOVEMBER 2016 NOVEMBER 2016 NOVEMBER 2016
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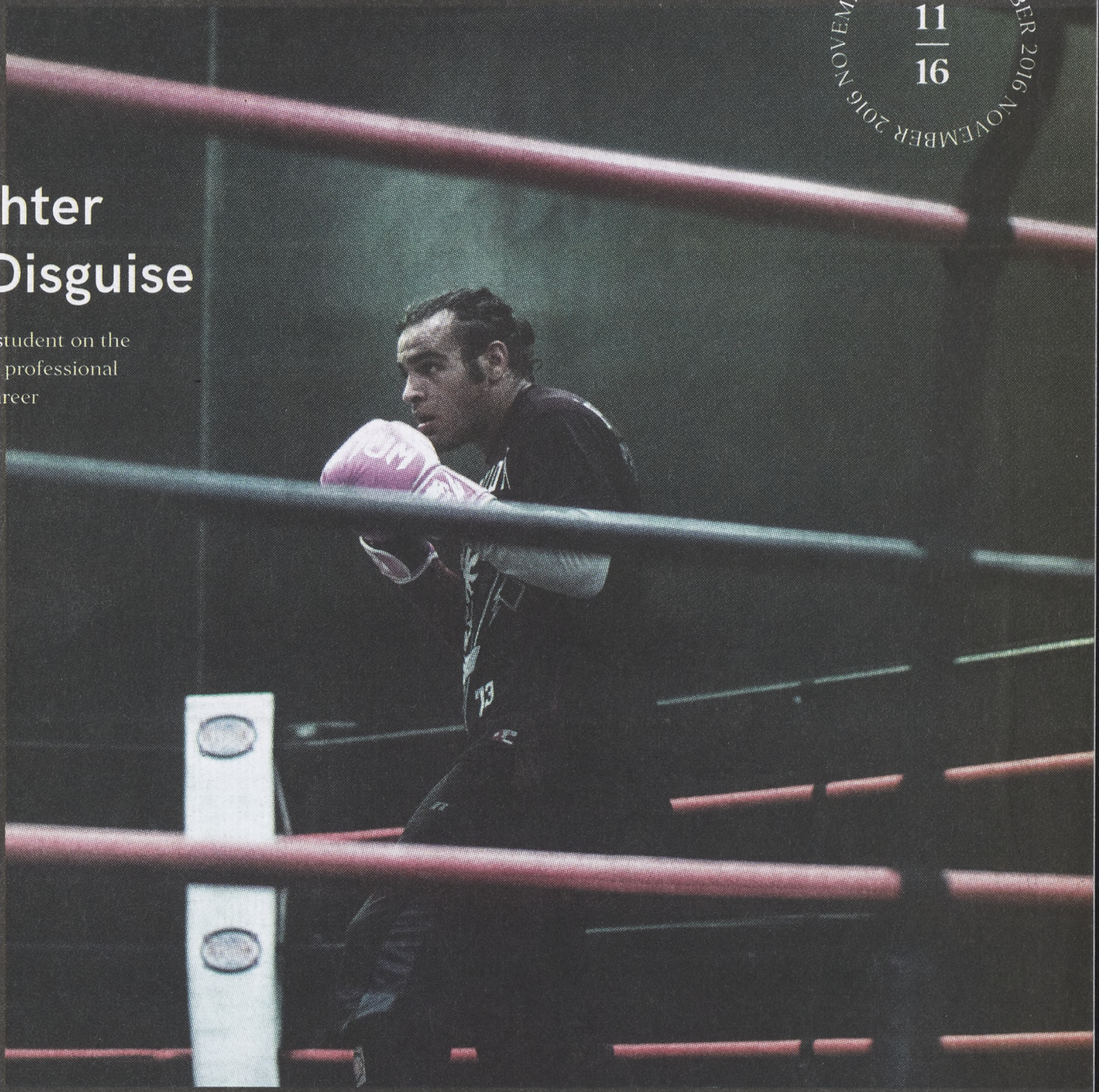

Fighter in Disguise

CSULB student on the way to a professional MMA career

Pizza 'round The Beach! p.12

Inner Contents: What's in Your Bag? p.14

International Student Spotlight p.16

November—2016

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On the cover
Gabriel Green

Photo
Trang Le

DIG MAG is a student-run publication at California State University, Long Beach. We produce original content for the curious residents of Long Beach. DIG MAG focuses on being the insider's guide to Long Beach culture, reporting on the city's latest food, fashion, fitness and entertainment.

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Editor's Note

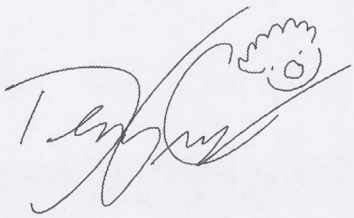
November brings many emotions: Daylight Saving Time never fails to bring me so much joy (and much needed sleep); the imminent Fall Break that brings us the time of turkey, laughs and more turkey never fails to make me fat; and this country never fails to make me cry.[1]

But, it's more than that. There's always that point in the school semester that just makes it seem everything is dragging on a little too long. After a while, everything starts to blend together—classes, social life, homework, job, etc.

November, to me, represents the final sprint. The beginning of the final hurrah in this semester and everything we've been invested in, not only academically, but this entire calendar year. After a long gap from Labor Day—the only other holiday we truly take the day off before Thanksgiving season—until now, it's just finally nice to know there will be a week where we can stay home and just, quite frankly, do nothing.[2]

To me, vacation is when I get to stay at my house. Traveling and all that sort of thing is nice, but it becomes a taxing endeavor after a while. It requires effort. And, there's just this inevitable sigh of relief upon returning home that just puts everything at ease—"I'm finally home. I can rest now."[3]

Perhaps I'm alone in this. What does November mean to you? It's the precursor to the Christmas season,[4] the psychotic rush of Black Friday[5] and the festivities of New Year's Eve. Whatever your take on it is, have a good holiday. Take it easy out there, and, no matter your religion and tradition, go ahead and pig out and get fat this upcoming holiday season. You deserve it.



Denny Cristales
Editor-in-Chief
digmageditor@gmail.com

(1) Google "The 2016 U.S. election"

(2) I don't care if I get assigned homework or not—I'm doing NOTHING.

(3) I swear I'm not an old man.

(4) And it seems like the blasted radio plays Christmas music earlier and earlier every year!

(5) Are you really taking advantage of good deals if you spend money unnecessarily?

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Agenda:

November

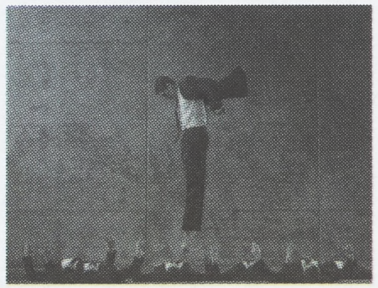
10

University Players presents: Elements
University Theatre in the UT Building

—

8pm
*Runs through Nov.19

16

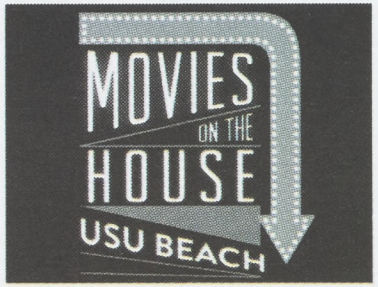


CSULB Dance in Concert
Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater

—

8pm

16—17



Movies on the House: Suicide Squad
USU Beach Auditorium

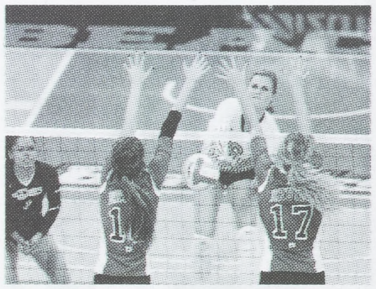
—

3:30pm, 6pm, 8:30pm

18

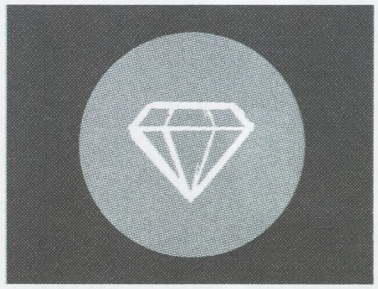
Latin Rhythms: Mexica Civilization Dance and Culture Class
Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA)
—
7pm

19



Long Beach State Women's Volleyball vs. UC Riverside
Walter Pyramid
—
7pm

20



The Holdup
The Federal Underground
—
9pm

23

Chill
The Queen Mary
—
*Select dates from
Nov. 23—Jan. 8

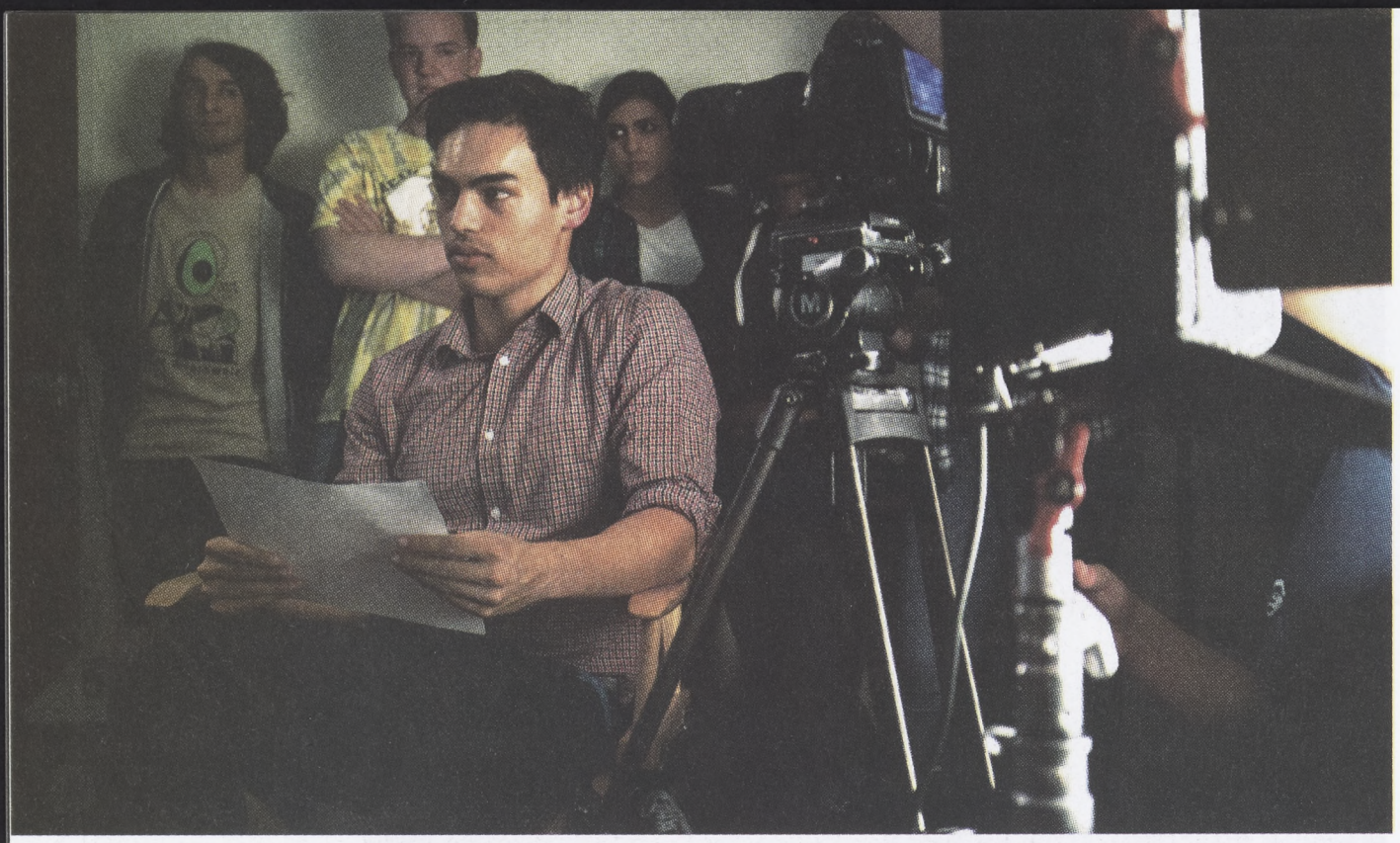
24

Long Beach Turkey Trot
Granada Boat Launch Ramp
—
7am

December

01

University Players presents: Duchess of Malfi
Studio Theatre in the Theatre Arts Building
—
8pm
*Runs through Dec. 11



Jason Lauckner directs Late Night Long Beach with his crew Thursday nights in the College Beat office.

New look, new season

College Beat producer talks Late Night Long Beach and interest in film

WORDS Emily Ayers

PHOTOS Trang Le

It was a late Thursday evening when the creative chaos at the College Beat TV offices was finally beginning to wind down just in time for a writers meeting. Jason Lauckner, the executive producer of Late Night Long Beach, peered into his computer and led the group into discussion about editing the first segment of the semester.

The writers laughed as they started reading a scene that begins with the host of the show and two others sitting around, high on marijuana, and slowly freaking out as they realize they haven't prepared for the taping that is supposed to start in a half hour.

Filmed in front of a live audience at the Nugget Grill & Pub, Late Night Long Beach is a College Beat entertainment production that is currently in its fifth season as CSULB's own late-night show.

The show made its season premiere on Oct. 26 and is accessible on College Beat TV's YouTube channel and social media accounts, as well as public access channels Charter 32, Verizon 41 and all of CSULB's University Student Union flatscreen TVs.

As part of Lauckner's vision, the series will now take a look at topics that are more relevant to college students in a style similar to "The Daily Show." In the past, the show was more reminiscent of "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon."

"What inspires me isn't just things that are funny," Lauckner said, "But it is words that have a meaning behind them or an underlying subtlety that moves me. That is the cornerstone of all good comedy."

Navigating the role of producer isn't new for Lauckner. His journey with College Beat TV began three years ago when he volunteered as a freshman, working his way up and gaining experience with

writing and production. He was the head writer of Late Night Long Beach last spring. Now in his junior year studying film, Lauckner seems to have found his place.

"I remember vividly one of my earliest memories was that I wanted to be a magician," he said. "It was everything I practiced, until one day my dad introduced me to Star Wars, and I was captivated by those types of old-school movies. I wanted to make movies like that."

In high school, Lauckner mostly made short films and as a freshman was initially turned off to the idea of doing television. However, after becoming a part of College Beat, his mind opened to other forms of media that he felt might also satisfy his career goals.

Jason Lauckner, executive producer of Late Night Long Beach—a College Beat entertainment production—explained that the show's recent change in format to a more "Daily Show" type was to better relate issues to students.

Growing up, Lauckner remembers never being the popular kid but being the stereotypical one who sat in the back of the room cynically judging people. What changed his perspective was a trip he took to Vietnam in high school.

"It opened my eyes," said Lauckner. "All of these small moments hit me that maybe I should try to get out of my shell more. It transitioned from that, and I became a better student and finished high school with a 4.5 GPA. When I went to college, I wanted to continue that involvement but I still think that critical judgment I had of people is definitely where my comedy has grown from."

Bellflower was Lauckner's home during his elementary school years, but he has also lived in Montebello and Pasadena and currently resides in Long Beach. His older sister, younger brother and parents have been supportive throughout his journey.

Lauckner's personal growth can be seen in the many relationships he has fostered at College Beat TV. Current chief executive producer of College Beat TV Nicole Ilagan, formerly a producer for Late Night Long Beach, was the one who chose him as the show's newest executive producer.

"He was heavily involved in the beginning stages as the head writer," Ilagan said. "He knew what it took and he showed interest, so it just made sense. He is passionate about production, and I think he tries to push the limits. He sees what the volunteers want and, from that, looks at what they can create." Lauckner said that once last season was wrapped up, a lot of work went into how the show's crew members could improve the show. After hammering out some aspects of the show, they eventually came to a point where he was able to ask himself what he wanted to do with the show and made the structural changes necessary.

Senior communications studies major and journalism minor Jenn Lucas is the host for this season's show and has found working with Lauckner to be inspiring.

"He continually works around my schedule and is always collaborative when it comes to my thoughts on changing or removing parts of the script," Lucas said. "I never feel disregarded by him if I am giving any concerns or input and with his guidance, the team is able to maintain a safe environment that is free from stress or judgment."

As with any new project, the undertaking of revamping the show has come with its challenges. For Lauckner, the greatest challenge been learning how to write journalistically.

"With older seasons, it was monologue and one-off jokes. With this season, we want more journalistic integrity," Lauckner said. "That takes a lot to research the topics and constantly revise drafts so they are as accurate as possible. That has honestly been the hardest part because there will be a huge chunk of information and I have to see where I can put jokes in."

Lauckner said when he first started out it was all about his own vision, but now he has learned how to rely on other people's expertise and viewpoints to write the show.

Sophomore journalism major Jess Kung, a writer and camera operator for the show, said that one of Lauckner's strengths in leading the team has been the freedom he gives to writers and the space he gives them to grow.

"He is good about giving constructive criticism," Kung said. "This show does rely on people laughing, at least a little, and that's what happens a lot in the writers room."

For Lauckner, part of the whole experience that has meant so much to him has been seeing the effort and passion from those he works with.

"I am grateful because it is so rewarding when people say this show is worth their time and effort," he said. "They come to work sometimes until 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. on a weekday. I have learned to not underestimate the dedication of other people, and I have learned to appreciate their work."

The Varsity Gay League, a nondiscriminatory organization with seasonal sports leagues, arrived in Long Beach in October. Participants, pictured here, engage in team activities such as kickball.

Just kickin' it

Kickball Arrives in Long Beach

WORDS
Zachary Juarez

PHOTOS
Terrah Starling

Reminisce for a moment being back on the old stomping grounds at your elementary school. Not having any bills to pay—or not even knowing what bills are for that matter. Your only concern is being the first up for a game of kickball. You're the best at this game, at least that's what you tell yourself, and you have no fear, so you disregard the dangling shoelace as your foot connects with the ball. This level of carefreeness can once again be achieved with the arrival of the Varsity Gay League (VGL) here in Long Beach.

The VGL is a nondiscriminatory organization focused on support and fun. It's a seasonal league with various out-of-the-box activities, but since the VGL is new to Long Beach, the only available sport is kickball. The Long Beach league officially began this past October and currently has 70 registrants. Since its inception in 2007, the VGL has garnered over 6,000 members throughout four separate locations. Along with Long Beach, the VGL has a presence in West Hollywood, Sacramento and San Diego, and this current fall season the combined leagues have 1,500 unique players. Originally starting with a game of capture the flag, it wasn't until 2011 when league play was integrated with the emergence of kickball.

According to the league website, it was created as an alternative to the monotony of the bar scene. One night after walking into a bar with his friends. Will Hackner, owner and founder of the VGL, looked around and decided that's not where he wanted to spend his time.

"We left [the bar] and ended up playing tag in West Hollywood Park for two hours while sprinklers went off and strangers joined us," Hackner said. "That inspired me—that there are others who like to have fun [without alcohol]."

The Long Beach Varsity Gay League only offers kickball, but it plans to include other sports in the future.

League play lasts eight weeks and contains people of all ages and skill levels. It only costs $60 to join the league at any time as a free agent, and people can be placed on a team with an open slot. For those who aren't sure if they'd enjoy themselves, for a fee of $5, one can sub in for a game without being registered with the league.

"It's extremely hard for people who aren't athletes, who have grown up insecure about their sexuality, who already come into any social situation with a level of fear or concern, to step outside their comfort zone and go for it," Hackner said.

According to several participants, there is a tremendous amount of bonding that comes with being in the league.

"It's great networking," member Gary Treadaway said. "You make new friends and friends become family."

League manager Alex Mehlbrech has been playing in the league for two years and was instrumental in bringing the VGL to Long Beach.

"My teammates became my best friends," Mehlbrech said. "We'd have sleepovers the night before a game."

The socializing plays a key role for many members.

"It's nice to see old faces and meet some new ones," Jimmy Lanigan said. "It's also fun to socialize outside bars."

Lanigan has been playing in city leagues for a few years and loves it, but he does have one bad experience involving a non-LGBT league.

"I was never discriminated against until last season," he said. "My friends and I were asked not to join a certain team because the captain knew we were gay."

As the league grows, more sports will be added like dodgeball, beach volleyball and flag football. There is one activity the VGL has that requires all participants to be at least 21-years-old and that is the beer olympics. The beer olympics involve teams and a series of drinking games such as beer pong, ribcage, flip cup and relay chugging.

The league also has the potential to acquire big-name sponsors. The West Hollywood league features Bud Light, General Mills, Quest Nutrition and the Dodgers as endorsers. The Long Beach VGL is currently sponsored by local business Hamburger Mary's. The sponsor helps with partial payment of the field rental and also acts as a post-game meeting place where players can receive discounted food. Also to ease the pain, the losing teams receive a certificate for a free pitcher of draft beer.

"As of Oct. 9, 58 people have signed up," Mehlbrech said. "Right now, we have four teams, so hopefully we have eight by next season."

This league is also a family affair for Mehlbrech because his mother and sister are signed up to play on his team.

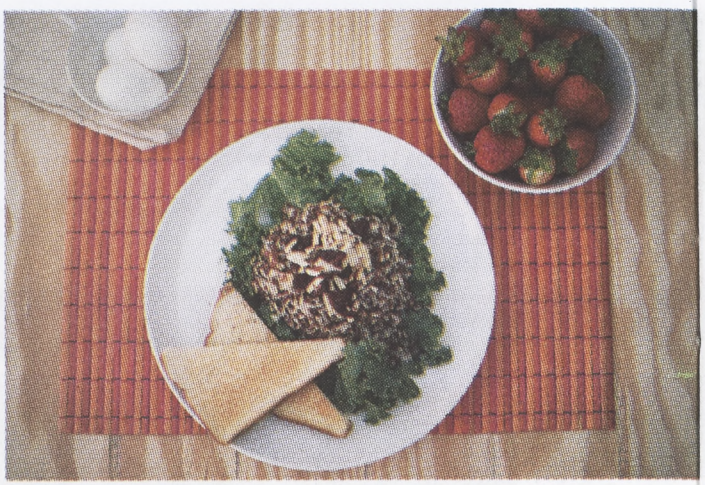
Long Beach is a large hub for the LGBT community, so it was only a matter of time before the VGL came to town, according to Hackner.

"Long Beach has always been a location we've been eyeing to continue growth, but with any business, you need staff, capital and time," Hackner said. "It's our hope to be a place for everyone to show up, say hi, build a bond, share a hug, a game, a drink and feel like their weekly schedule has one unique highlight, which we will be us."

Eating in and saving money

WORDS
Alejandra Garcia

PHOTO
Edward Singleton



Most millennials nowadays can't even boil an egg, but there's always take-out right? There's endless possibilities eating take-out, but maybe it's not the best option since there are so many other things to consider while eating out.

Is it healthy? How much money can I spend this week? Do I even have money in the bank? All those little things add up. Cooking is not as bad is it seems, so relax and take a deep breath. There's a way to take control of food and managing money. Meal preps have a reputation of being boring and a drag to make. The same to-go meal always seems to be rice, broccoli and chicken. But this is an opportunity to have fun with food—yeah, fun!

Cooking isn't just for Generation X, and, maybe when you get comfortable with the idea, you might throw dinner parties instead of lame kick-backs with chips and beer. We're all here to learn something new. There are people out there that prepare their food in advance for a busy week. Many college students, especially the ones who live out on their own, tend to have a full schedule. School, work, studying, going to the gym—it's a never ending list of to-dos. So, having a meal ready will always save money and time.

Step: **1**

Grocery shopping can seem daunting at first, but Maya Cox, president of CSULB's Student Dietetic Association, shared some tips in navigating the store.

It all starts with your pantry.

"(A pantry) makes each trip to the grocery store less daunting," Cox said. "It doesn't have to be elaborate, and understand it takes time to build one. There is no need to go spending all of your money on something you think you should have but have never used."

Cox said some essential items include olive oil, basic herbs and spices and grains. Plenty of ingredients that you can find at the grocery store are inexpensive. Dry goods like rice and beans are always a must because of their long shelf life.

After stocking up, weekly shopping is easier. Visiting your local farmer's market is always a good idea. You can pick out vegetables and fruits that are in season, and you'd also be supporting local farmers.

If you're on a tight budget, there's always a good variety of vegetables at the 99 Cents Only Store.

Step: 2

Planning meals ahead is always important. Cox suggests making lists and schedules ahead of time. CSULB students also chimed in on their experience and tips of their own.

Adulting can be hard to do, as they say, but spanish major Dinora Rivera prepares her week by setting a day especially for errands. Setting time aside is a must during a hectic schedule, she said.

"It's all about trial and error," said Rivera, who added that it took time to get a routine in place, but help from her roommates made it easier.

When planning ahead, use Google and Pinterest to find healthy and delicious recipes.

Cox suggests penciling in recipes on your calendar, as if you're studying for a test. Shopping becomes easier when you shop for the items you need, and, if you're cooking for yourself, make the whole serving count to have food for the rest of the week.

Step: 3

Don't be afraid of the Crock-Pot!

"A life saver is the Crock-Pot," Rosana Anguiano, fine arts major, said. "It's one of the most amazing things I've ever bought... especially when you're at school all day—you can make a soup and add whatever and let it sit on low for eight hours, and, when you come back, you'll have food, and you don't have to stress out about cooking because you just want to eat."

Anguiano also mentioned freezer meals, which are simple ingredients that you can put in a resealable plastic bag. Each bag is frozen. Then, you can take that freezer meal and cook it in a slow cooker while you're at school.

Slow cookers are affordable, and it's another handy item to have in the kitchen besides having the basic pantry necessities.

Step: 4

Take turns cooking.

"If you live with roommates, take turns preparing dinners so it's not always you who has to cook," said Rivera, adding that she rotates cooking duties with her own roommate, who makes plenty of Asian dishes. "Don't be afraid to try new foods. Before, I didn't eat eggs, and it's in a lot of Asian foods."

Free nutrition counseling is available at the Health Resource Center and Beach Balance in the Student Recreation & Wellness Center. Nutrition counselors will help answer general nutrition questions and set healthy goals. To set an appointment, visit asirecreation.org.

Pizza 'round the beach!

WORDS
Riva Lu

PHOTOS
Riva Lu

Pizza has been around since 997 AD, but why has it remained so high in popularity amongst other foods? Simple—It's quick, easy and affordable!

Pepperoni and cheese or a simple combination can suffice, but why not try some of the most "unusual" pizzas in Long Beach that are fit for your budgets? Here are some unique places in Long Beach that will satisfy your cravings:

7th Street

—1430 E. 7th St.

Feeling Mexican? Feeling seafood? Can't decide? You can order half-and-half pizzas at this location. If you're struggling to decide on what to get, 7th Street Pizza offers the best of both worlds. This place is most popular for its Mexican, Love Burrito and Italian Shrimp Ceviche Pizza. 7th Street Pizza has been around for only two-and-a-half months, but so far business has been booming thanks to its unique pizza flavors. Have no fear friends—this place accepts cards! It also has a deal with mobile app Yelp EAT24, an app that allows people to order for delivery, that grants $2 off your next purchase with a promo code.

Thai Curry Pizza & Thai Food

—929 Redondo Ave.

Have you ever felt guilty for not eating your vegetables? Being a college student may make it difficult to satisfy all food-category requirements in the food pyramid, especially when you're on a budget and can't afford to eat healthy. This family-owned shop can satisfy your needs. "We have been around for 15 years and are mostly known for our Thai Curry Pizza and Tom Yum Pizza," pizza maker James Phom said. "The owners will sometimes give out free Thai tea for students who make big orders." This place also offers vegetarian and tofu options of its well-known specialties if you are not feeling like a carnivore. The workers and regular customers are also very friendly and make you feel welcome the moment you step inside. This place is cash only, but an ATM will be available shortly!

Michael's Pizzeria

michaelspizzeria.com

—210 E. 3rd St. Ste C

If you're ever craving seafood pasta with clams, shrimp, octopus and Calabrian chili while you have pizza on your mind, why not try some Fruitti Di Mare pizza? Yes, this thin crust pizza actually has shellfish and actual clams on top! Customers rave for the freshness and tenderness of the seafood on this pizza. There is an indoor and patio setting here, so if you're ever thinking of a pizza date, the atmosphere here would be great. This place pledges to serve its customers a pizza as similar to one from Naples, Italy itself! The pizzeria also has a large selection of wine, if you're feeling a bit fancy, and beer selections. There is free Wi-Fi, parking validation and it's dog friendly if you wanna bring your pup!

Deli News Pizza

—5555 Stearns St. Ste 104

If you're near campus and are in the mood for an energetic, lively atmosphere with beers on draft to pair nicely with your pizza, this is the place for you. You can order a pizza per slice if you're not feeling so hungry. Deli News Pizza has a variety of items on its menu, including a delicious Seafood Combo Pizza, served with a marinara base, layers of tomatoes, cheese, bell peppers, onions and shrimp. If you're also in the mood for a special pasta, the store has daily specials to load up your carb cravings. Lazy to get out of your house? You can order through the Postmates app and have this delicious pizza ready to be delivered at your door.

Pizzanista

—1837 E. 7th St.

Here's a pizza that is made for college students — Mac and Cheese Pizza. These are the two simplest things that anyone can make (or purchase). If you're craving a marinara cheese pizza and mac and cheese, you will definitely fall in love with this pizza. Every Sunday, Pizzanista offers this unique pizza. Vegans, they also offer a special version of this pizza that will satisfy your diet! They are premade and ready to go by the time you come in, so, if you're in a rush, it will take only a few minutes until your pizza is ready. Each pizza is so unique that employees can't even point out the "most popular" flavor. It has a welcoming, cozy atmosphere and spacious seating if you want to come with a large group.

TEACHINGS
LOVE

Marlboro

DIRTY
ORIGINAL RECIPE
POTATO CHIPS
MESQUITE BBQ
We Kettle Cook
In A Premium
Peanut Oil Blend For
A Crunchier, Tastier
Potato Chip!
Net Wt 2 oz (56.7g)

Trident
WHITE

WORDS
Jaque Craciunescu

PHOTO
Edward Singleton

Inner WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG? Contents

When it comes to opening up, people can be reluctant.

However, when we asked students to open up their bags for us, we were surprised at how eager they were to do so. Read ahead to see what we found, and reflect on what the contents of your own bag reveals about you.

Junior design major Nina Pham was surprised to discover how neat her bag was. "It's funny," said Pham. "Normally, I'm a really messy person, but with art I'm really neat. I didn't realize that until now." Inside her bag were art supplies, including two sets of pastel-colored pencils, sketch pad and pencil case filled with mechanical pencils and black pens of varying tip sizes. Also in her bag was her wallet, earbuds, laptop charger and laptop. Pham said her most essential items are her pencil case and laptop.

"The pencil case and MacBook have gone through a lot with me. I can't live without them," she said. In addition to her bag, she also carries a 24x36-inch sketch pad to her classes twice a week.

As an artist, Pham says all these supplies are necessary to bring with her on the daily for her classes. If it were up to her, though, the only art supplies she would bring are her pencil case and sketch pad, since her preferred medium is black-ink work. Her bag is strictly for school, and she chooses to pack significantly lighter on her off time, including her mainstay essentials—a couple of lipsticks, a wallet, a phone and her keys.

Vladimir Ickert, a graduate German international student who is studying industrial engineering, can relate to the idea of wanting to pack light. "There's nothing impractical [inside my backpack]; just everything I need," said Ickert. He went on to joke about how his backpack is very much a typical guy's backpack.

"Girls put everything in [their bags] they may need... someday," he said. Ickert's self-described "practical and comfy" backpack holds his laptop, tablet, earbuds, USB, calculator, turkey and pepperjack cheese sandwich, granola bar, water bottle, pack of gum, keys and change of clothes for the gym.

However, not everyone chooses to carry the bare necessities. Harlee Morikawa, a super senior women's gender and sexuality major, hauls quite a few extras.

She carries everything from a laptop cord and cough medicine to chips and cigarettes. Morikawa knows it's unnecessary to carry the cigarettes with her to school with the current smoke-free policy. "I have them more for comfortability," said Morikawa, who stated she plans on quitting before she turns 26. The main downside of carrying so much is that things can get heavy. "[My bag] is big so it carries everything, but it really hurts my shoulder," she said.

Among her electronics, she carries two pairs of earbuds—one, which she accidentally mistook as her own when they're in fact her boyfriend's—her phone, laptop charger and laptop. "My laptop is always at full storage because it has my whole life on it," said Morikawa.

With her is also her latest assigned book Love Life and the World. She recommends it for the positive message, which "teaches about compassion and mindfulness."

A couple fun extras in her tote include a pair of sunglasses and some makeup.

And just like Beyonce, she's got hot sauce in her bag, swag. Her explanation of two Tapatio packets in her bag: "I love spicy food." She admits that she loves spice so much she would even put it in the sandwich she had packed for lunch.

What people carry day in and day out can give us a glimpse of a person's personality, but it's important to remember that it would be difficult for anybody's contents to paint a complete picture of who they really are. "I feel like even though there are a lot of bits and pieces here, it only reveals an aspect of me," said Morikawa.

PHOTO Cody Cano

Students Share an International Point of View

WORDS
Diane Vay

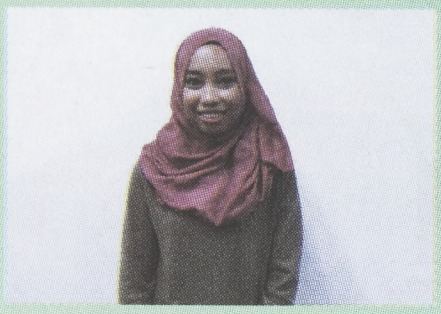
PHOTOS
Diane Vay

When studying away from home, there are many things to consider on top of transportation, living expenses, placement exams and registering for classes. According to Campus Facts Fall 2015 on csulb.edu, there are nearly 2,000 students from foreign countries. DIG Magazine talked to six international and exchange students, who shared some of their experiences after coming to CSULB.

PHOTO Cody Cano

«...that's the reason society is able to function much better. People actually really do follow the rules and they're scared of breaking it.»

—Gautam Prakash



Nur Aaliaa Ayuri Rujhan

21, liberal studies major

Rujhan is an international student from Putrajaya, Malaysia. She has studied at CSULB for three years. Her sister was studying at San Francisco State University when she mentioned this school as an option. Rujhan decided to study here after finding out that one of her family friends from Malaysia also applied as an international student. They had never met before and decided to live together in an apartment outside of campus.

Rujhan said she thought people would be less accepting of her headscarf, which she considers a part of her identity. Her mom told her that she had the option of taking it off. Rujhan, who is also half-Japanese, chose to wear her headscarf to fit in with her elementary school classmates in Malaysia. She also attended a boarding school that required headscarves as part of the dress code.

"After coming here, it's, like, totally different. Like, people were more friendly, accepting, so I had no problems with the people here, so I really, really like how the people here tolerate... other people that are different than them. It was before I came here that [my mom] told me to be careful and stuff... She used to come to the United States, but that was a long time ago, so she had a different perspective about the states."

"There were some experiences with people shouting at me... They all think that all Muslim people are Arabic, I think? I don't get offended or anything when they shout at me because I know they don't understand it. Probably, [because] they've never been with people who are Muslim, so they kind of have this stereotype, and I get it mostly from old men who gave this bad talk. Sometimes, I ignore and smile at them. That's one of some experiences that are kind of scary, but, most of the time, it's OK. But, I like it here. I learned to be open-minded once I came here. You feel like you're the majority people when you go back home, but when you come here, you feel like the minority, so it feels really different. That's what I learned when I came here. I learned a lot. Being a minority here taught me a lot to understand how other people feel."

Safwan Najjar

23, aerospace engineering major

Najjar is an international student from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He lived in San Diego for a little over a year before attending CSULB. His brother was a student on campus and graduated in May.

"One thing that I kind of notice here... Maybe it's a college thing, because I wasn't in college in my country... but in schools and things like this, everybody knows everybody, but, here, it's not exactly like that. Like, you can be with many classmates, but you never talk with them in class. It could be a college thing, but it could be a cultural thing here. I'm not sure. Part of the interesting things here in Long Beach... [is that] it's so diverse—people from everywhere. I love this. This is so nice. I got used to it, even when I go back and visit my city, I miss the diversity here."

Gautam Prakash

24, computer science major

Prakash is an international student from New Delhi, India, who is working toward his master's degree. He chose to attend CSULB because of tuition costs, which is about $15,000 less than the other schools he researched. Prakash applied to seven schools before choosing this one. He has studied here since Fall 2015.

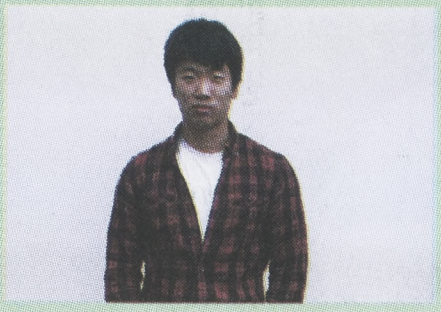
When Prakash arrived at the U.S., he said he noticed several differences compared to India.

"India is much, much more corrupted compared to the U.S. Even for jumping a red light, I could just bribe the cop a hundred rupees [currency] and get away with it."

Prakash said he's bribed a cop before and wasn't prosecuted. "I knew if he scanned me, nothing would come, but I was having beer in the car. You aren't allowed to drink in public. I was driving in my car, and I had a pint of beer, which was open. I think things are much more stricter [here] and that's the reason society is able to function much better. People actually really do follow the rules and they're scared of breaking it. In India, it totally depends who your contacts are. You can get things done with a small amount of money under the table, but that thing is changing. Nowadays, people are getting more strict. Right now, India is going through a change around the past two years."

"Yes, we [in India] do have old-fashioned thinking... We have poverty and all, but we have a sense of society. I would talk to my neighbors more. I would have my friends around, and we would almost meet every day. I would have my family around. It's a common thing to sit down together in the evening and share how your day was or how something was. What I have noticed over here, during the weekday—people meet different people on the weekend—but, weekday, people are so monotonous. During the evening, your neighbors or someone—everyone is just concerned with their life. It's something like, yes, you're in a society, but you're still alone. That thing isn't there when you're back in India. At some level, we're used to people interfering with our lives."

When Prakash arrived here, he made friends with other students from India. He said he was shy at first, but began meeting new people. Prakash said he was concerned about his accent and how to approach others correctly.



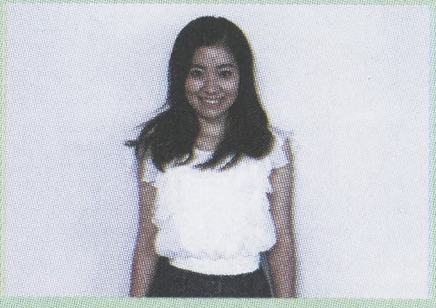
Meng Long Cong

25, educational psychology major

Cong is an international student from Qingdao, China. He said CSULB provides a program that focuses more on research methodology compared to other schools. He has lived in Long Beach for the past three years. During that time, he says he lived next to a drug dealer on Coronado Avenue.

"He lived in a garage. A lot of people got in and out of his garage. I heard from the police it wasn't a good area. I lived there for one year and within two blocks and there were police cars that blocked the back side of Coronado twice. There was a helicopter, too. I was just watching TV with my roommates and didn't know what they were looking for."

He said there were at least 10 cop cars each time the street was blocked. Cong moved out last month. "Before coming here, all I knew about Long Beach was Snoop Dogg," Cong added. He is currently working toward his master's degree. After that, he wants to earn a Ph.D., do more research and teach at at an American university, such as a CSU, he said.



Reina Hoshino

21, communications major

Hoshino is a study-abroad student from Yokohama, Japan who's been at CSULB since this August. Hoshino says she has dreamed of studying in the U.S. since she was in middle school. Her first time in the states was in 2012 when she went to Virginia on a class trip. She visited California two years later. After coming to CSULB, she noticed that students behaved differently in class compared to others in Japan.

"I found that in class, in lecture, many students [asked] questions or gave opinions, which never happens in Japan. In Japan, students just listen to their professor and never give their opinion during a class. It depends, but in most cases, Japanese university students don't take class seriously, so they are just talking to friends during the class or on Facebook, I don't know, but they don't really listen to the class and professor. People here are more likely to give their individual opinion. Japan is a country of collectivism, which makes Japanese more like the importance of 'be in harmony.' They really care about the atmosphere, so they don't really want to give their opinion, but, here, it's different."

"I don't know if it can be applied to all the cases, but the medium-sized [meal] in Japan is a small size. A large size is a medium size here. When I go to the supermarket, they sell bigger stuff like ice cream or pizza. Pizza is very different in size —it's much smaller. You can have a bigger size, but you'll have to pay additional costs."

Aside from food costs, there were other things Hoshino had to consider. She said she thought of moving in with her father, who lives in Newport Beach, but then thought about the hour commute to Long Beach. Hoshino found a host family close to campus.

Hoshino said her home university, the International Christian University (ICU) in Tokyo, does not have an exchange agreement with CSULB.

"If I was an exchange student, my home university would do everything for me," Hoshino said. "Because I'm not an exchange student, I have to do everything myself."

«I think the life here is easier—they take it easier. People are way friendlier than back home.»

—Ayla Dickert

Ayla Dickert

23, economics major

Dickert is a study-abroad student from Schweinfurt, Germany. Dickert has also attended CSULB since August. She said one of her friends -an alumni- recommended this university to her. She always wanted to study at an American school. Two years ago, she had a roadtrip along the West Coast, which is when she decided she liked California. Dickert says she wanted the beach and the sun near her. She also liked the people, who she says are friendly.

"I think the student life is way different than back home in Germany. Over here, you have to do homework, assignments every week and you have tests and everything that counts into your grades. In Germany, it's typical that you only have one final exam after a semester... Here, you have to attend the class, and in Germany, you don't have to. So, you can choose if you go to a university or if you study by yourself at home. That's a big difference, but I think the good thing over here is that it keeps you on track. I think over here, they care a lot about the students because they have so much sports activities, clubs and the recreation center. In Germany, we have something like that, but very, very little of it. Like, one or two clubs for soccer and volleyball, and that's it. Or, like a small gym. Over here, you can spend a whole day at the university and that's what I like about it."

"I think the life here is easier—they take it easier. People are way friendlier than back home. For example, you say, 'Hi, how are you?'—even if it's way more superficial. Especially in Germany, you have to really have to get to know them until they are nice to you. They won't say hi to you even when you're in a store. I actually think it's harder to get to know people from America, specifically because they are superficial and just say 'Hi, how are you?' but then they don't go in too deep and say 'Do you want to do something?' When people from abroad come over to us, we try to hang out with them. I only get to know Americans when I go out or when I'm on a boat trip, but, at a university, it's a little hard."

Blood is Thicker than Gravy

A Millennial's Take on Modern Tradition

At five in the morning, 29 degrees Fahrenheit, I breathed some warmth into my fingers and aggressively broke the snow-muffled silence that enveloped the sleepy Vancouver, Washington neighborhood. With a sacrificial gift card from my wallet, I began scraping a thin layer of ice from our car windshield, doing my best not to totally disturb this street's post-Thanksgiving hibernation. When I finished, I looked toward home—somewhere a thousand miles over my left shoulder—then across the driveway at the house we had to leave and knew I'd be there again next year, same time, a long way from home. It was tradition.

WORDS
Tanner Hewitt

ILLUSTRATIONS
John Portis

People say, "Love makes you do crazy things"—I always liked that one. Well, driving for 16 hours nonstop from Orange, California to Vancouver, Washington twice in a week to eat some turkey with my sister and her family is a bit loony, but I've done that a bunch of times. I can easily glam it up for you. Once you get past the deserts and the hundreds of miles of strip malls and into the north of California, there's a great wonder in driving through the shadows of mountains on roads tucked away in forests older than the idea of our country – but that's bliss from the passenger seat. That's solace recovered from looking in hindsight. Ralph Waldo Emerson was talking about life when he said it was a journey and not a destination, not driving down the million-billion feet of concrete on the I-5 Freeway. I never thought twice about the misery of driving that far. I just wanted to see my sister.

Despite this sappy start, believe me when I tell you I'm just as cynical as the next millennial. We knoww the story of Thanksgiving is basically a lie, and we delight in rolling our eyes at the corporate holidays fabricated to turn out our pockets. The NFL owns Turkey Day, let's be honest, and the airlines make a killing income during the winter holidays. We scoff at the unauthentic. But, tradition is real. Family is real. Watching your nephew grow up on Facebook is not. Those chances you get to squeeze your loved ones, to settle into that care-free holiday

state of mind, to look into eyes with the same blood as yours in them—those are real.

If, when you think about the approaching holidays, ys, the crowded malls, the crowded dinner tables, the awkward family photos and the ensuing family political debates ("screaming matches"), then you need to re-evaluate. We live in the unequivocally most comfortable generation of all time. Technology has given us the easy way out of almost everything, yet we still cling to this penchant for cynicism. When you have the whole world in your pocket, it's kind of hard to fathom the work that goes into making that happen. Everything we cherish was, somewhere along the line, brought to us by the sweat of someone's brow. That's what Emerson was talking about.

I'm not trying to say that college isn't challenging or that nothing is hard anymore, but – it isn't, and it's not. Look, I don't want to sound preachy, and I definitely don't want to write an anti-tech piece, so roll your eyes back this way and trust that I do have a point. When we're young, we push our boundaries, discover our own limits, use those limits to build our character, create our own traditions. As we get older, the things we really don't feel like doing are probably what's best for us. I didn't figure this out or anything, and I can guarantee someone gave this advice a decade ago, and probably a century ago, ad infinitum. What I can do is tell you how I figured this out for myself.

My mother dropped out of high school to have my sister when she was 17. Eight years later, my sister would cry all night when she couldn't stay at the hospital with her new baby brother. That age difference made us very close—we never had to compete for anything, and I always looked up to her as a kid. We went to all the same schools. We only shared the same mother—but we've never thought of each other as half siblings. She moved to Washington with her husband and my infant nephew when I was a senior in high school, and I was devastated.

She was the only one who knew what it was like to live with my mother—we had the same checkered past. All the nooks and crannies of that aren't important, but a lot of people say they have a crazy mom—well, ours was like the "undiagnosed but needs medicine but takes drugs instead" kind of crazy. She always needed help, but we were ill-equipped and, frankly, fed up. I think a certain part of my sister found comfort in being two states away from the kind of anxiety she gave us.

I've been a pretty crummy student most of my life. I was satiated by sometimes wallowing in self pity at the crap life had thrown my way. I knew I was capable, but it was easier to use my past as an excuse for why I wasn't putting any effort into building my future. As a child of divorced, drug-addicted parents, I felt this incredible weight on my shoulders. I think the truth of it was that I desperately wanted their lives to be OK before I could begin thinking about my own. My dad figured it out, got himself together and made a life for himself in Texas. As years went by, my mother could never stabilize her life, and by the time I was in my 20s, and she in her later 40s, her life had taken a severe tail spin.

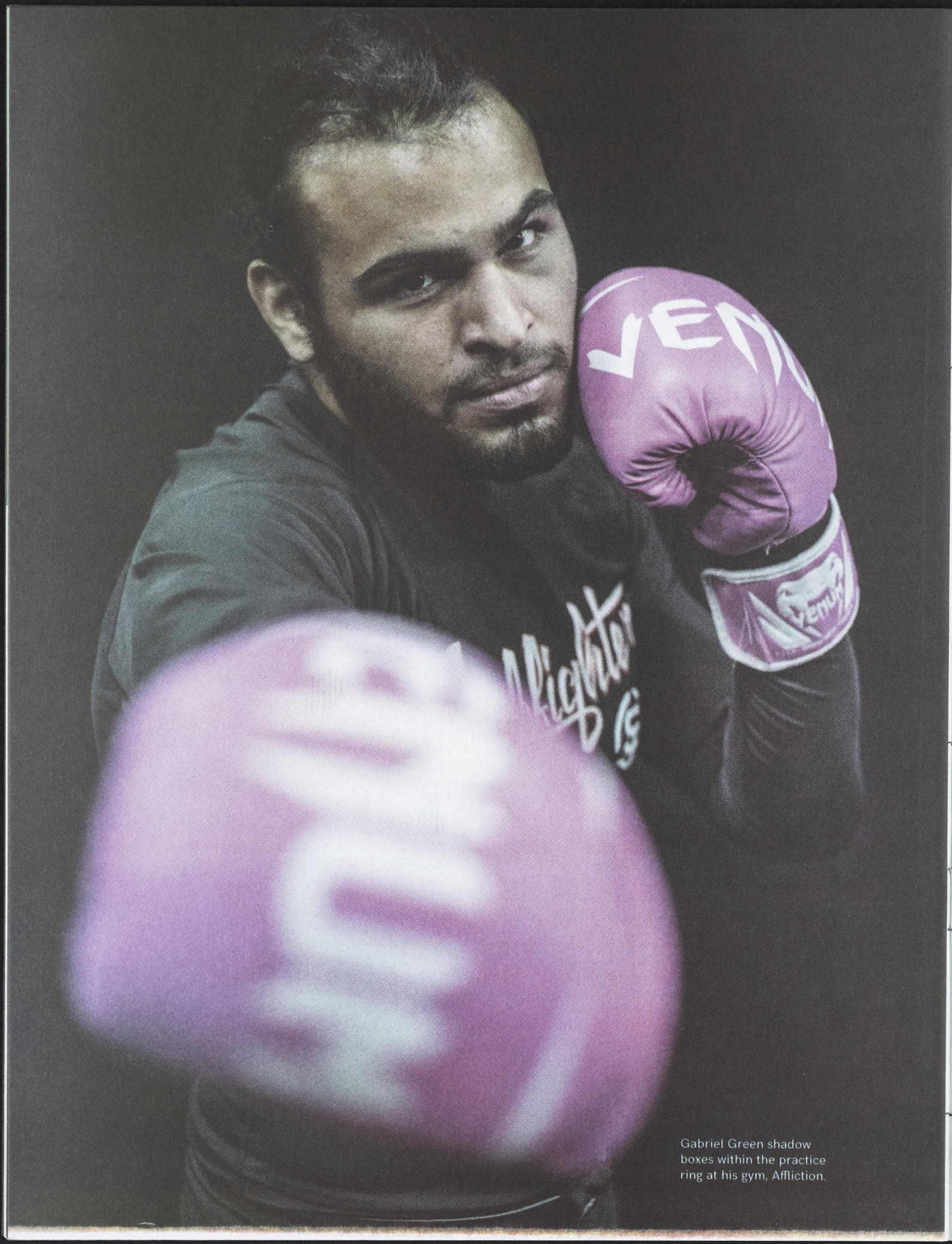
Whether by her design or sheer terrible luck, she was subject to eviction after eviction, lost one home to a fire and struggled to hold onto anything for very long. She was miserable, and the first half of last year things were reaching a fever pitch. By May, it was apparent that my mother, again on the brink of eviction, had run out of options. The stress I felt was astounding. I couldn't wait until Thanksgiving to see my sister—I needed to be with her. We needed to talk about our mom. I planned a trip to go see my sister, and in the week that led up to it, my mother and I had some terrible arguments over the phone. It's not easy trying to get someone to realize the error of their ways, especially when, despite all the issues we'd had together, I'd never really let her know how much they'd affected me. I was scared for her, she was scared for herself and we both didn't know what to do about it.

The day before I left, my mom called to ask if we could see each other that night. I had just gotten an iPhone 6 and wanted to play around with it and had to wake up early for a flight to Washington the next morning. I told her I didn't want to see her. She said to call her when I got off the plane. She said, "I love you." I said it too. I hung up the phone. That was the last time I heard her voice. The next day, I flew to Washington. My sister got me from the airport and we went out for sushi. We went to her house and cracked open a couple of beers when my aunt called me. I had been in Washington all of two hours. She told me our mother had died that morning and that her roommate found her stiff in her car in the driveway, like she was going somewhere.

This tragedy has been going on since the dawn of humanity, so I will spare you the rest of the details, but let's just say losing a parent in your 20s is a little less than ideal. What's important is that all of the weight, all of the sorriness for myself—in the wake of her absence, it seemed to evaporate. My mother had tried to take her life before and had made it known she never wanted to get old. It was kind of like I always expected her to go before her time. I was still shocked, still unbearably heartbroken, but I wasn't afraid anymore. Everything else I had ever whined about seemed...farcical. Why hadn't I ever dragged my butt out of bed early enough to make it to school on time? Why had I ever groaned while taking pictures on a family vacation my grandmother was nice enough to provide for me? It's cliché, but my whole life literally changed overnight. I could let myself have a future.

«I was scared for her, she was scared for herself and we both didn't know what to do about it.»

My grandmother shared some grim wisdom with me once. She said, "One day, Tanner, it will just be you and your sister." Heavy, but so very true. So, when you start thinking all those jaded thoughts about "jumping through hoops" to achieve a boring family tradition, remember that little piece of wisdom. It pains me to use another tired cliché, but be thankful this season. Everything you lay eyes on is a gift to you. Nothing is certain, nothing is guaranteed and, in this day and age, nothing is that hard. Kiss your mom's cheek or your dad's cheek or your grandma or your dog or whoever and just relish every second of it.



Gabriel Green shadow boxes within the practice ring at his gym, Affliction.

Fighter in Disguise

GABRIEL GREEN GABRIEL GREEN GABRIEL GREEN

CSULB student on the way to a professional MMA career

WORDS
Yasmin Cortez

PHOTOS
Trang Le

Hundreds of screaming fans can be heard cheering for the man they call "Gifted," with only a gate separating the crowd from the action.

He pins his opponent against the ropes with quick jabs and a knee to the stomach. His adversary instantly drops to the floor as firm legs begin to coil up around him. He's unable to move.

3...2...1...and the crowd goes wild for "Gifted"! He stands up and is blinded by flashing camera lights as he waves to his family in the crowd. "And the winner is..." echoes through the arena as the referee yanks his arm up in the air, officially declaring him the winner.

Meet "Gifted" Gabriel Green.

He's 5'10 complete with a ponytail of long jet-black hair trailing behind him and a huge fox-like grin on his face, and is often seen carrying a gallon of water around the Cal State Long Beach campus.

One wouldn't peg this 23-year-old for one of the top-ranked mixed martial artists in the nation, but "normal" doesn't necessarily describe this business economics major."I don't like the idea of being ordinary," he said. "So, once I started fighting, I realized I liked it. I just didn't want to be another person. I want to be the best, and that's what I'm trying to do." "Gifted" is a senior in his last semester at Cal State Long Beach, currently working on earning his bachelor's degree.

He has kept up a 3.2 GPA, all while never losing a match, boasting a 3-0-0 pro MMA record and an overall nine streak win when factoring in his amatuer fights.

According to Tapology.com, Green is ranked 31st out of 193 active California Pro Lightweights and 79th out of 434 U.S. West Pro Lightweights.

Green's gym, Tracy Hess' Subfighter MMA, is less than three miles from the CSULB campus, which is convenient on days he needs to get back and forth quickly, he said. Green started fighting about two years ago when Ryan Medina, a friend from Warren High School in Downey, suggested that they train together. Medina, unlike Green, had prior training in jiu jitsu and was no stranger to the MMA world. "We had classes together, but I didn't really know him," Medina said. "He was a football player, and I was a wrestle,but we slowly started talking and found out we both liked fighting." It took Green one year to take up Medina's offer to start hitting the punching

bags. "He kept saying, 'I'll be there next week,' and I said 'Quit being lazy!'" Medina said. "Finally, he came in and fell in love with it, so I guess it was love at first sight." Terry Hess has been Green's coach for less than two years, but he has already seen rapid growth in his technique.

"He is a dream student," Hess said. "You get a guy that comes into your gym with that much athleticism and his hard work matches it. A lot of guys come into the gym who don't have the drive and don't work as hard and it just comes naturally; he's the opposite. He works harder than he is talented."

Hess was not sure what to expect of Green when he first walked into the gym. He said it is rare for someone to climb up the ladder so quickly, but is grateful to see him grow not only as a fighter but as a person. "He was actually a really quiet kid. He was athletic but very raw and didn't have any wrestling background—no formal martial arts training. He was just a football player," Hess said. "But, he had a strong cardio base and picked up everything instantly." Green earned a blue belt in jiu jitsu within six months, Hess said.

"Some people can train six months, but they only come to class two days a week, three days a week tops, and that's as fast as they're learning," Hess said. "Gabe was coming in every day, twice a day. So, within a six-month period, he's getting 10 times the amount of training someone else is."

When Green isn't in the ring or in class, he spends his free time teaching MMA classes to kids. During his classes, he encourages his students to not only be passionate about MMA, but about their future in general.

"I want to get them to think about what they want to do with their career," he said. "When you're in elementary school they teach you history, math and science but you don't really know or get any idea of what you can do with it in the future besides being a firefighter or doctor. They don't really see what options are out there." Medina said that although Green is one of the best MMA fighters, it doesn't stop him from being goofy or humble. In fact, his teammates and his coach would describe Green as being one of the kindest and funniest guys.

"You never know when he's serious or not," Medina said. "He'll walk up to you and he'll be like, 'You look good!' and you'll ask, 'Where did that come from?' and he'll walk away. But he's never talking down on you. He's hilarious. He's just being Gabriel."

Not everyone ranks up as quickly as Green. Just this past September, Green qualified to fight in Bellator, the second-largest fighting association behind Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). Even though he is qualifying for professional MMA fights, he doesn't get nervous or worry about winning or losing because he has complete faith in his own ability and training.

"It's like when you're getting ready for a final in school," Green said. "I know all the material already because I've brushed my ass studying. So, even though I don't know the exact questions word for word... I know the material, so I'm chilling. I usually just lay down, relax, eat some snacks backstage and take a nap." Green said he is typically calm the moment before a fight. He isn't aware of the people around him. He's in his zone.

"I'm not really scared or nervous," he said. "I'm just really excited and happy. I just spent weeks getting ready for the fight. That's hours and hours of my time I'm never going to get back. I couldn't eat the food I wanted to eat, couldn't hang out with my friends and family. All I was doing was grinding for this one moment. So, I'm just happy all the bullshit is over and now all I have to do is the fun part. All I gotta do is go out there and collect the fruits of my labor."

«Originally, I wanted to be a doctor, but now I send people to the doctor.»

—Gabriel Green

Now that Green has ranked up and earned more professional fights, more people recognize him. "Randomly, I'll be in town, and I'll be at a food spot eating with my buddies," he said. "A guy will just walk up to me and be like, 'Hey, did you fight this person at this place?' They'll shake my hand or ask to take a picture. Usually, it's after fights where it gets crazy and people start asking for autographs. It's surreal. I never thought it would be like that, ever."

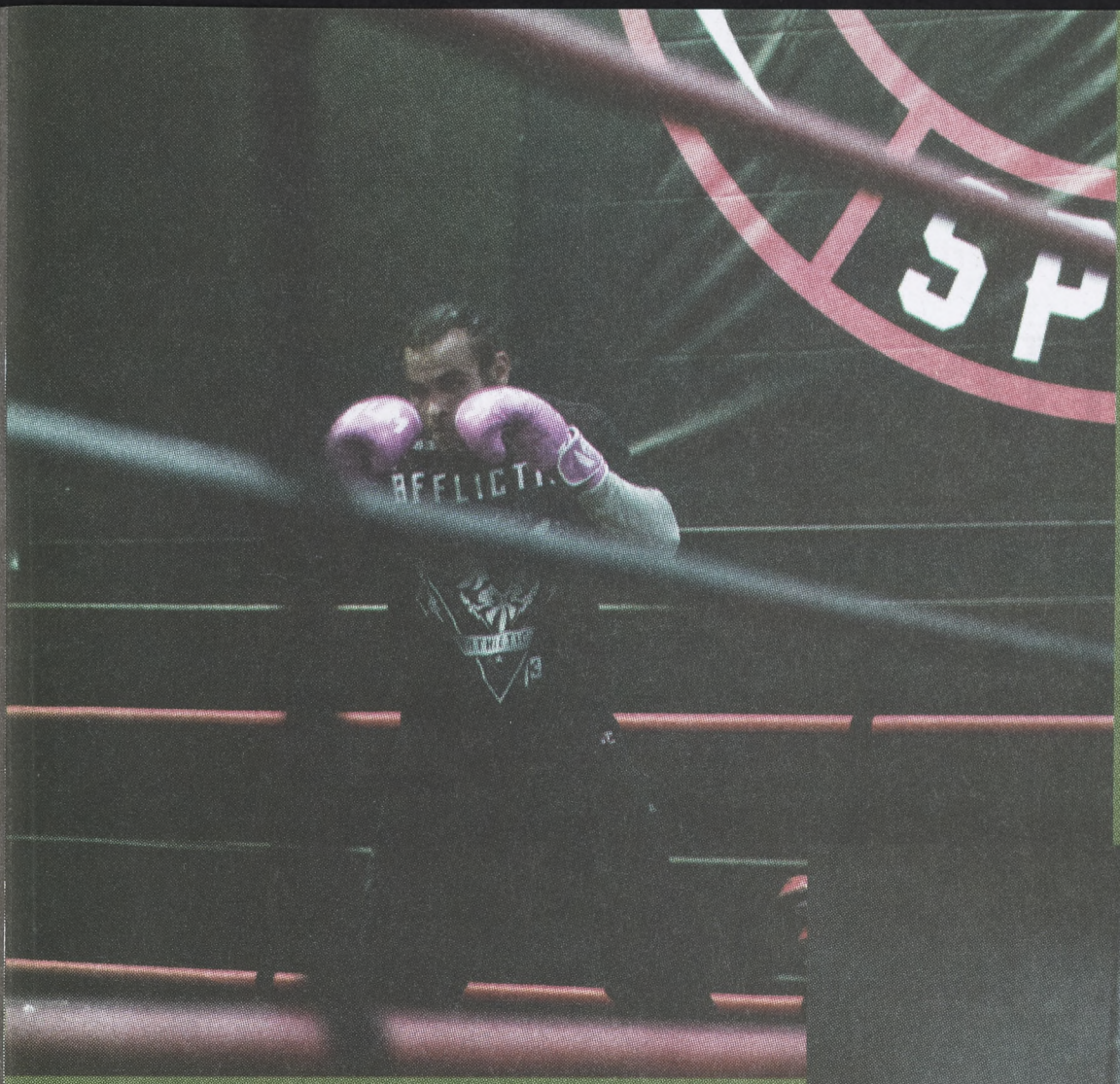
Indeed, Green did not always envision his life as an MMA fighter. "Originally, I wanted to be a doctor," he said, "but now I send people to the doctor."

Green also wanted to be a biology major but switched to a kinesiology major and then eventually settled on being a business major. He admitted that his GPA has slowly begun to decline the more time he has spent training, but Green has no regrets.

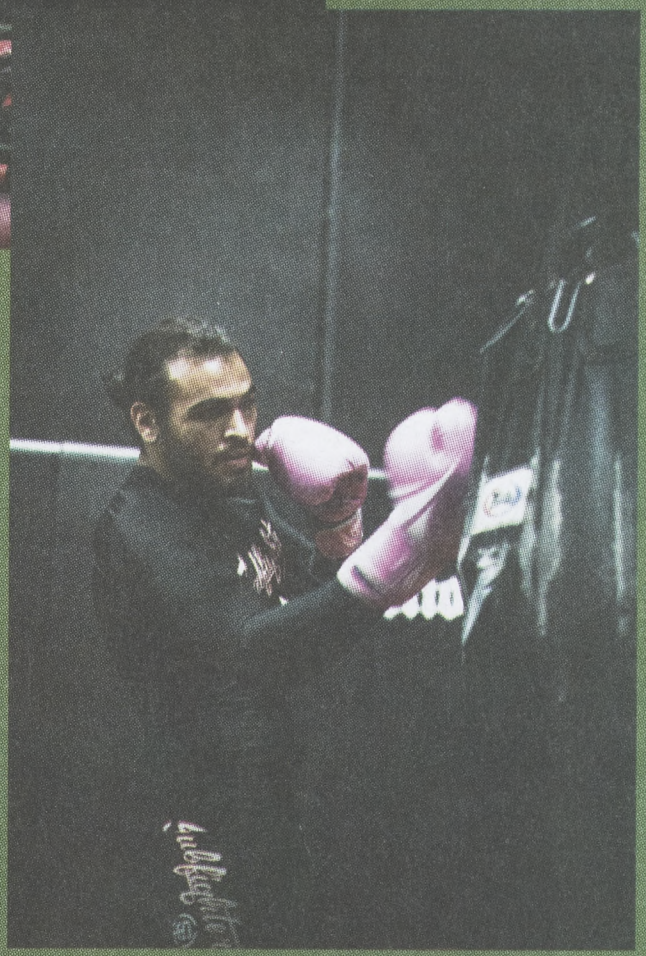
"I'm going to be honest, fighting comes first. I don't always go to class," he said. "Sometimes I'll message my professors to tell them my situation." In previous semesters, Green has found himself struggling to balance school life and his MMA life. Green said that after becoming so invested in MMA, thoughts of not finishing school began to run through his mind.

"My parents wanted me to go to school and finish for sure because the whole fighting thing isn't guaranteed," he said. "A couple of times, I thought to myself, 'Maybe I shouldn't finish school.'"

But, with great fighting comes great responsibility. Green is determined to keep his promise to his family by finishing school. "I said I was going to get my degree," he said. "I told my parents I would



Gabriel Green, local student and mixed martial artist, began training two years ago when his friend, Ryan Medina, suggested that they train together. He hasn't stopped ever since.



because I had started it already, and I said I would finish it. But, as soon as I'm out of Long Beach, it's going to be full on MMA."

Although his heart lies with MMA and his world revolves around fighting, he said he also needs to plan for the future. "I have this window," Green said. "My body can only be an MMA fighter for so long, but then my bachelor's degree will always be there, or if I need to go back to school to get a master's, that will always be there." Green's family is incredibly supportive of his passion, he said.

Whether it's New York or Hawaii, they will make the trip to every single one of the fights regardless of how far or busy they are. "My family [members] are like my biggest fans," he added. "I'm really lucky." Every fight, Green usually sells, on average, about 120 or more tickets, a majority of which are purchased by relatives.

Despite the overwhelming support, his family still has their worries about the dangers of MMA fighting. "They hate the idea of me fighting," he said. "I mean, who wants someone they love to go into a cage with someone else who will hurt them real bad? They don't like that part, but they know this is what I really, really want to do."

Ask The Expert:

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON MUSIC

As studies and technology advance, so does the depth of research on the correlation between music and the brain. In recent years, researchers, primarily in music and psychology fields, have conducted more and more research to explore the correlation. **WILLIAM ROSAR** is in the preliminary stages of creating an institute for Film Music studies here at CSULB. He is also the editor of a scholarly publication called The Journal of Film Music. Currently, Rosar is a research associate at the Center for Brain and Cognition in the department of psychology at the University of California, San Diego.

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Generally, what is happening to your brain as you listen to music? Are there brain structures specialized for just music?

"Because music is something heard by the portion of the brain called the auditory cortex having to do with hearing and the processing of sound is involved much as it is when we listen to speech. Though there is no special 'music center' in the brain, recently it has been found at MIT that a select population of the brain cells in that area specifically respond only to music. This is not surprising when one realizes that our primate ancestors originally had no special 'speech' centers in the brain, as they are called now, because they did not speak. Rather, these areas were probably involved with expressive vocalization and hearing it, such as cries and hoots -- what ethologists call 'ululation.' One theory has that our primate ancestors first 'sang' before there was language, as can still be heard in jungle Gibbons who sing."

Are there any benefits of listening to music before you sleep?

"Obviously, it depends upon the type of music. Quiet, restful music promotes relaxation, whereas loud, bombastic music would lead to arousal and tend to keep one awake—that's a 'no brainer,' you might say. If music is arousing, your whole body responds, not just your brain. The same applies to music that helps to quiet your body and brain—which is soothing."

We always hear listening to music can positively affect your brain while you study. Is there any research to back this up?

"It depends upon the type of music. There was the famous 'Mozart effect' years ago that claimed listening to his music promoted the development of intelligence, specifically spatio-temporal reasoning. That gave rise to the popular TV program Little Einstein, which featured classical music and kids in different problem-solving adventures, though not just with Mozart, but with classical music in general. The jury is still out as to whether there is any long-term benefit or just a short-term one involving positive mood and general cortical arousal."

Why is it that we always hear that listening to classical music is best to listen to while doing something?

"There was a Polish mathematician-philosopher named [Józef Maria] Hoene-Wronski in the 18th century who claimed that 'music is the embodiment of the intelligence in sounds,' meaning that the classical music of his day embodied intelligence, like intelligent purposeful behavior, what today we would call 'embodied cognition.' While at a recital playing music of J.S. Bach, I remembering having the distinct impression that I was listening to intelligent discourse, something like reasoning, and then it occurred to me that it might be explained by the fact that Bach modeled his music on the principles of classical rhetoric, which pertained to how to present a convincing argument through logic. So, that pertains to thought processes, not just sound per se."

In 2014, the documentary "Alive Inside" explored how music affects the brains of people who suffer from memory loss. Has there been any other significant studies made in seeing how music can help those suffering from memory loss diseases?

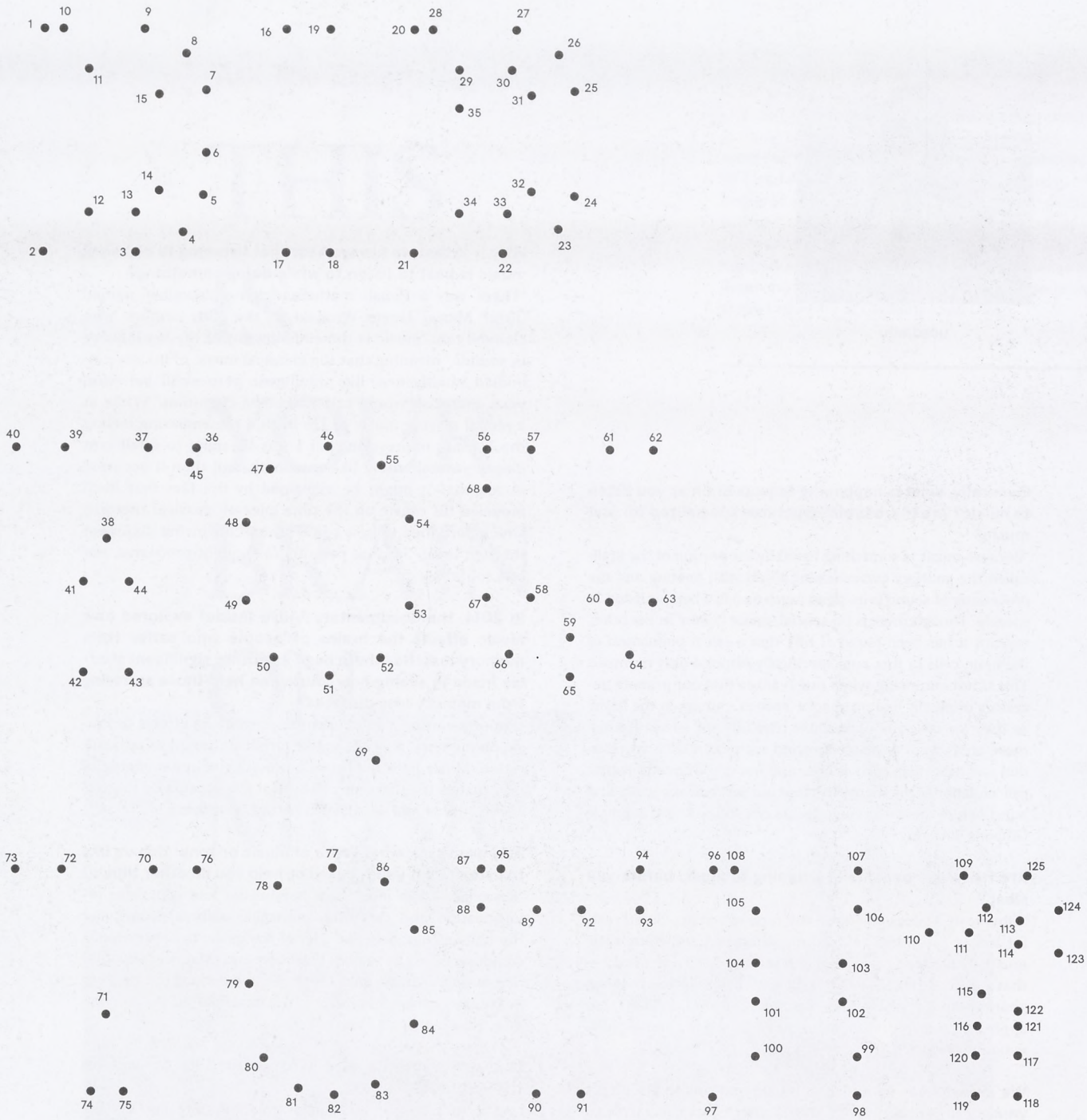
"Reports continue to confirm the beneficial effects of music on memory. It is not unlike physical therapy in rehabilitation. Music patterns [give] brain activity in a meaningful way, just as the patterns of physical movements do in exercise, and this has been called neural patterning."

As a professor, what genre of music or songs do you like to listen to get you focused or help you do other things?

"Personally, I like music that is evocative and stimulates my imagination and creativity, preferably without words, but through feelings. So, I like a lot of the music by impressionist composers such as [Claude] Debussy and [Maurice] Ravel for that reason. Debussy talked of music as reflecting the 'mysterious affinity between nature and the imagination.' A lot of film music has much the same effect.

Is there anything else you would like to add on the subject?

"We only now have the imaging technology to really probe the secrets of the musical brain, though what we are finding tends to confirm what most of us already know—which is that there is something special about music, and that probably reflects our ancient evolutionary past and the process of communicating feelings to each other. Right now, V.S. Ramachandran in our research group at UCSD is starting to investigate possible neural correlates of the ancient 'ragas' of India, which are something like musical scales, but are thought to embody 'rasa,' an essential mental state or dominant emotional theme of a work of art or the primary feeling that is evoked in the person that views, reads or hears such a work."



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